Executive Editor
WILL LIEBERSON

Editor
ROY ALD

Art Editor
AL JETTER

WORLDS OF FEAR, STORIES OF WEIRD ADVENTURE, Jan., 1952, Vol. 1, No. 2, is published bi-monthly by Fawcett Publications, Inc., Fawcett Place, Greenwich, Conn. Second class entry applied for at the post office, Greenwich, Conn. Additional entry applied for at Louisville, Ky. Copyright 1951 by Fawcett Publications, Inc. Trademark of Fawcett Publications, Inc. Editorial and advertising offices, 67 W. 44th St., N. Y. 18, N. Y. Send remittances and letters concerning subscriptions, change of address, etc., to Circulation Dept., Fawcett Pl., Greenwich, Conn. Subscription rate 12 issues for $1.20 in U. S., possessions and Canada. Foreign, $1.70 in international money order, U. S. funds. Printed in U. S. A.

IT BEGAN IN SMALL WAYS AS THESE THINGS ALWAYS DO. A WATCH STOPS TICKING. A MAN OVERSLEEPS. THE CAB DRIVER TAKES THE WRONG TURN. TRAFFIC IS HEAVY. AND THAT ONE NIGHT, THE PLANE LEFT SECONDS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

PASSAGE BOOKED, EVERYTHING TAKEN CARE OF! AND THERE SHE GOES WITH MY BAGS ABOARD. WELL, I STILL HAVE A CHANCE OF KEEPING MY APPOINTMENT! IT'LL DEPEND ON TRAIN SCHEDULES AND LUCK!

LUCK, IT SEEMED, STOOD WITH FRANK THOMPSON.

MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE BEST OF A BAD DEAL AND GET COMFORTABLE. MAYBE I'LL EVEN BE ABLE TO GET A COUPLE OF HOURS OF SHUT-EYE ON THE RIDE DOWN!

OH, I'M SORRY. STUPID OF ME TO CROWD THE SEAT! I'M GLAD TO HAVE COMPANY ON LONG RIDES. PLEASE SIT DOWN.

I ALWAYS TRY TO MAKE FRIENDS ON LONG RIDES. HELPS THE TIME PASS. SAY, MAY I GET YOU A MAGAZINE OR SOMETHING? ON SECOND THOUGHT, MAYBE I'M INTRUDING. I SEE YOU WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE.

I SUPPOSE WE'LL RIDE THIS WAY ALL NIGHT. ME TRYING TO PEER BEHIND THAT VEIL. NOT FOR ME. FRANK THOMPSON'S GOING TO SLEEP TONIGHT IF THAT'S THE WAY IT'S GOING TO BE.

NIGHT FELL AND FRANK SURRENDERED HIS MIND TO THE OPIATE OF SLEEP. SUDDENLY, AFTER MANY HOURS HE WAS TORN FROM SLUMBER, HIS TONGUE THICK IN HIS HEAD, HIS EYELIDS HEAVY, HIS MIND NUMBED.

YOU WILL HAVE TO HURRY IF YOU WANT TO GET OFF. THIS IS YOUR STATION.

MY STATION? OHHHH...

PLEASE. BEFORE THE TRAIN PULLS OUT AND YOU'RE STILL ON IT.
YEAH..YEAH, JUST WANNA GET MY BRIEFCASE. DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU. EVER SO NICE.
PHEW! ALWAYS LIKE THIS WHEN I WAKE UP SUDDENLY IN A STRANGE PLACE. CAN'T THINK TONGUE LIKE A BOWLING PIN IN MY MOUTH.
THOMPSON HURRIED UP THE AISLE AND THEN DOWN THE CAR STEPS TO THE PLATFORM. THE COLD NIGHT AIR HIT HIM, AND HIS MIND BEGAN TO CLEAR!
WHAT AM I DOING HERE? WHY DID I GET OFF THE TRAIN?
YOU! YOU IN THERE! GIRL! TURN AROUND! FACE ME! I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME! YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS CRAZY STUNT! WHY DID YOU SEND ME OUT ON THE STATION PLATFORM? THIS IS THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE! WHY? WHY?
RAP! RAP! RAP!
A COLD CHILL RAN THROUGH THOMPSON. HE COULD NOT HELP SHIVERING. WAS THIS GIRL LEADING HIM INTO SOME KIND OF TRAP? HE COULD NOT TEAR HIS EYES FROM HER FACE ALTHOUGH EVERY NERVE IN HIS BODY BEGGED THAT HE LOOK BEHIND HIM!
BECAUSE YOU ARE DUE HERE TONIGHT!
BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHY AM I DUE HERE TONIGHT IN THIS FORSAKEN HOLE? MY TICKET ISN'T FOR THIS PLACE! TELL ME.... WHY?
BECAUSE OF THIS!
THOMPSON STAGGERED BACK AS IF HE'D RECEIVED A BLOW IN THE FACE. STUNNED, HE WATCHED THE TRAIN PICK UP SPEED AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE NIGHT.
A THING DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN LIKE THIS! SOMEWHERE IN THE PAST I MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING EVIL, SO LONG AGO I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS! AND I MUST BE PAYING FOR IT THIS NIGHT.

IT WAS A LONELY, FRIGHTENED FRANK THOMPSON WHO TURNED AROUND TO INSPECT THE DEPOT AND THE TOWN BEYOND IT. ONLY ONE SPOT OF LIGHT AND WARMTH BECKONED, AND THAT WAS FROM THE STATION-MASTER'S SMALL HOUSE!

I'M TIRED! MY EYES ... THE BAD LIGHT ... PLAYED A TRICK ON ME.

I - ER - I KNOW THIS SOUNDS SILLY! BUT I MUST HAVE GOTTEN OFF AT THE WRONG STATION.

COME IN, I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU!

EXPECTING ME?

YOU'LL BE HERE A LONG TIME. YOUR BEST BET WOULD BE TO GO INTO TOWN AND CHECK IN AT OUR TAVERN HOTEL. ON THE MORROW YOU'LL BE ASSIGNED PERMANENT LODGINGS.

THOMPSON FELT LIKE A MAN IN A NIGHTMARE WHO KEEPS RUNNING, BUT WHOSE FEET NEVER TAKE HIM ANYWHERE.

HE TRIED TO SHRUG OFF THE STATION-MASTER'S ADVICE.

I DON'T WANT LODGING. I WANT TO KNOW WHEN THE NEXT TRAIN GOES OUT OF HERE!

THERE ARE NO TRAINS GOING OUT OF THIS TOWN. ALL WHO COME HERE COME TO STAY! THERE ARE ONLY INCOMING TRAINS!

YOU MUST BE NUTS!

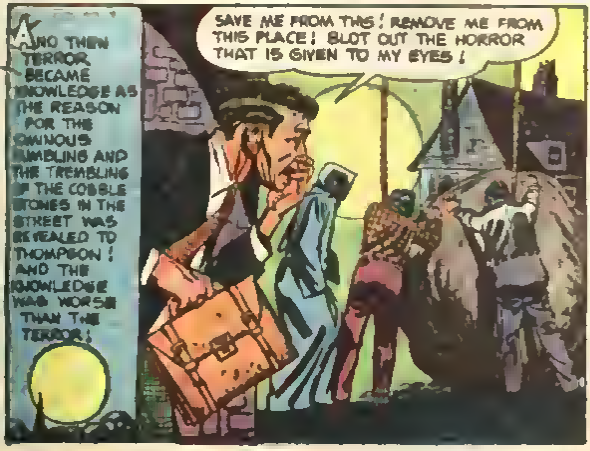
OKAY, PELLA. IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT. I TRIED TO HELP YOU. NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND, I HAVE MY WORK TO FINISH.

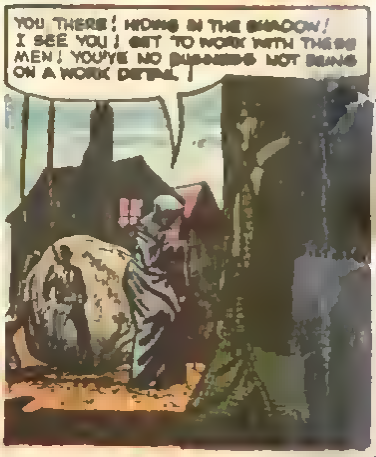
THOMPSON FELT THE BLOOD FREEZING IN HIS VEINS. HE TORE AT HIS COLLAR, FIGHTING FOR BREATH. FOR THE STATION-MASTER WAS TURNING HIS BACK ON FRANK THOMPSON AND THOMPSON REFUSED TO BELIEVE WHAT HE SAW!

YOU SHOULD BE DEAD!

I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! I MUST FIND SOMEONE AND BRING THEM BACK HERE AND SHOW THEM WHAT I'VE SEEN!

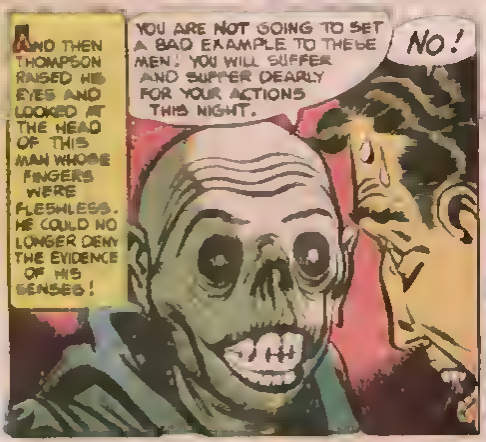
THE NIGHT WAS ONE WITH TERROR AS FRANK THOMPSON FLED. THE SOUND OF HIS SHOES ON THE STATION PLATFORM ECHOED HOLLOWLY, BEATING OUT A FRANTIC DESPERATE WARNING THAT THERE WAS NO ESCAPE!



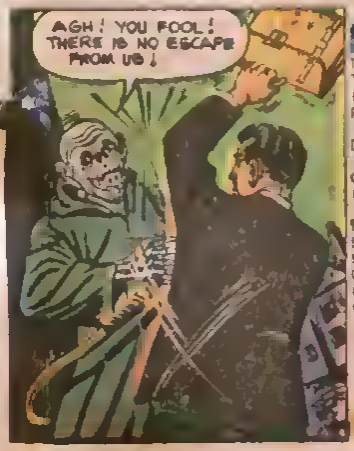


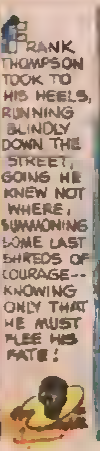
SLOWLY, FEARFULLY, FRANK THOMPSON EDGED FORWARD FROM THE PROTECTIVE SHADOWS. HIS VOICE QUAVERED.
I...I WON'T WORK ON THAT ROCK! YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!

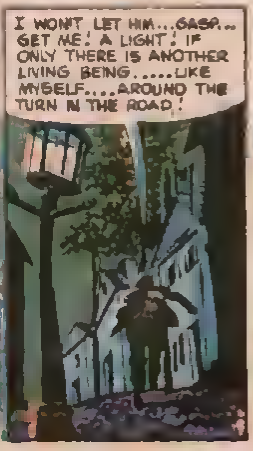
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?
THOSE FINGERS! THERE IS NO FLESH ON THEM!


AND THEN THOMPSON RAISED HIS EYES AND LOOKED AT THE HEAD OF THIS MAN WHOSE FINGERS WERE FLESHLESS. HE COULD NO LONGER DENY THE EVIDENCE OF HIS SENSES!
YOU ARE NOT GOING TO SET A BAD EXAMPLE TO THESE MEN! YOU WILL SUFFER AND SUFFER DEARLY FOR YOUR ACTIONS THIS NIGHT.
NO!

LET ME GO! TAKE YOUR HAND FROM MY WRIST! I'M NOT GOING TO SUBMIT MYSELF TO YOU! I WON'T BE A SLAVE TO A THING THAT IS DEAD!


AGH! YOU FOOL! THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM US!

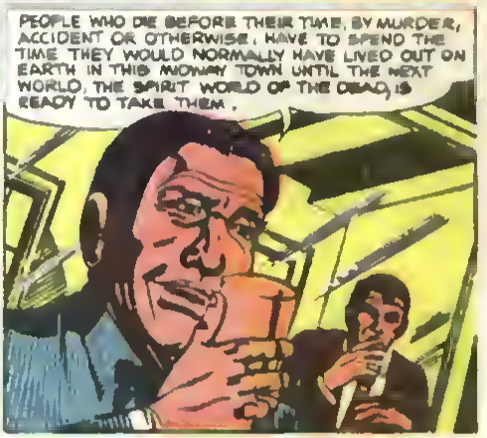

FRANK THOMPSON TOOK TO HIS HEELS, RUNNING BLINDLY DOWN THE STREET, GOING HE KNEW NOT WHERE, SUMMONING SOME LAST SHREDS OF COURAGE--KNOWING ONLY THAT HE MUST FLEE HIS FATE!


I WON'T LET HIM...GASP... GET ME! A LIGHT! IF ONLY THERE IS ANOTHER LIVING BEING.....LIKE MYSELF....AROUND THE TURN IN THE ROAD!

A...TAVERN! IT MUST BE THE ONE THE STATION-MASTER TOLD ME TO GO TO! PERHAPS THIS IS WHERE IT WAS INTENDED I SHOULD GO.
TAVERN

THOMPSON STAGGERED UP THE HARD GRANITE STEPS TO THE DOOR OF THE TAVERN AND THREW THE DOOR OPEN. WITH A GASP OF RELIEF, HE LOOKED INTO A WARM, WELL-LIT ROOM.

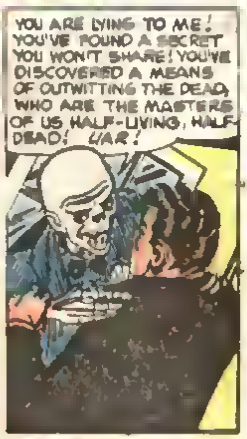
THE BARTENDER SET UP THE DRINKS, AND SOON THEY WERE TALKING AND DRINKING TOGETHER LIKE TWO OLD FRIENDS. AT LAST THOMPSON FELT SECURE, AND HE TRIED TO FEEL HIS NEW FRIEND OUT!



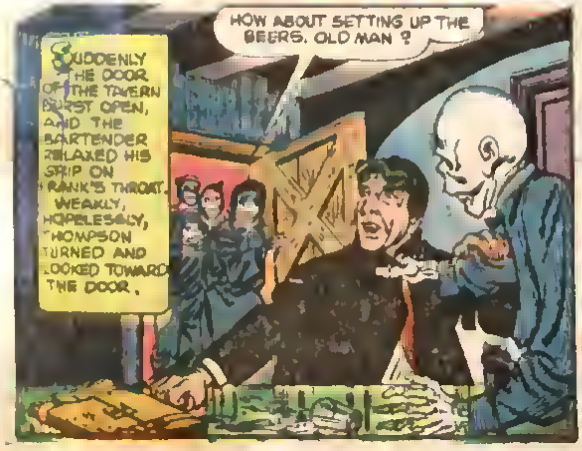
IT WAS ALL UNBELIEVABLE TO THOMPSON. FRANK KNEW HE WAS ALIVE. HE COULD FEEL THE RUB OF HIS CLOTHING AGAINST HIS SKIN. EVEN HIS SHIRT COLLAR WAS TOO TIGHT.

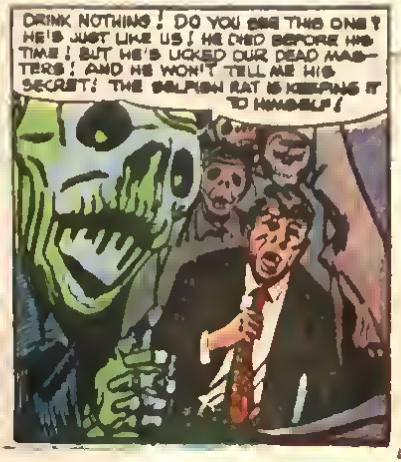
MAYBE THE BARTENDER WAS PULLING HIS LEG, HAVING A LITTLE JOKE WITH HIM!

THOMPSON HELD HIS BREATH. HIS EYES WERE [illegible] THE BARTENDER WHO STOOD AT THE OPEN WINDOW, A GLASS OF BEER IN HAND, AND TOASTED THE MIDNIGHT HOUR. THE FLESH MELTED FROM THE BARTENDER'S BODY!



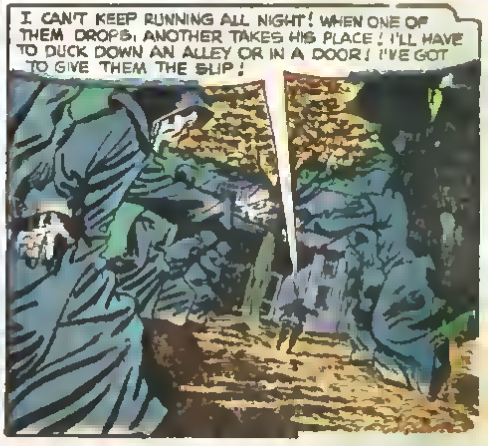
SUDDENLY THE DOOR OF THE TAVERN BURST OPEN, AND THE BARTENDER RELAXED HIS GRIP ON FRANK'S THROAT. WEAKLY, HOPELESSLY, THOMPSON TURNED AND LOOKED TOWARD THE DOOR.





AS THE BARTENDER INCITED THE THRONG OF LOST SOULS, THEY BECAME ENRAGED, HATE EATING AT THEM WHEN THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT FRANK THOMPSON MIGHT POSSESS THE KEY TO THEIR RELEASE.

THE MOB HOWLED, FOR THE CHASE WAS TO THEIR TASTE. FOR ONCE, IN THIS MIDWAY TOWN OF LOST SOULS, THE BEATEN WERE THE MASTERS, AND THEY WERE HOUNDING THEIR PREY WITH RELISH.



THE DEADLY GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK CONTINUED UNTIL JUST BEFORE DAWN. FRANK THOMPSON WAS EXHAUSTED. THE STRENGTH WAS DRAINED FROM HIS BODY. BUT HE SUMMONED HIS NERVE FOR ONE LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE!

THERE HE IS! THE TRAITOR!

THERE'S ONE BUM CHANCE STILL LEFT ME, AND THAT'S THE RAILROAD DEPOT!

THERE WAS A TRAIN WAITING IN THE STATION WHEN FRANK THOMPSON ROUNDED THE LAST BEND IN THE ROAD AND JUMPED FOR THE STATION PLATFORM.

STOP HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET TO THE TRAIN!

ARGH!

OUT OF MY WAY!

NO, NOT NOW! THEY CAN'T HAVE ME! I'M SO CLOSE TO FREEDOM!

GRAB HIM!

TEAR HIS SECRET FROM HIS FLESH!

AGH! HAVE MERCY ON US! LET US SHARE YOUR SECRET!

I MADE IT! I HAVE ESCAPED!

AS FRANK THOMPSON PULLED HIMSELF ABOARD THE SUN CAME UP, AND THE TRAIN PULLED OUT OF THE STATION, SLOWLY PICKING UP SPEED.

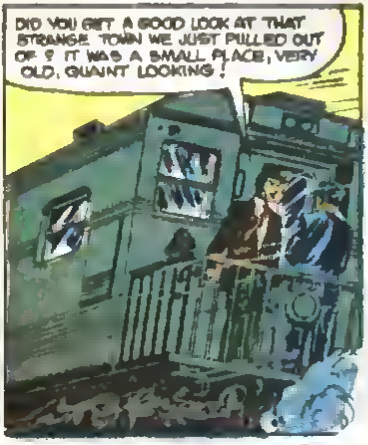
WE'RE PULLING OUT OF THE STATION. LEAVING THAT FORSAKEN TOWN BEHIND. WHY... WHY WAS SUCH AN EXPERIENCE VISITED ON ME?

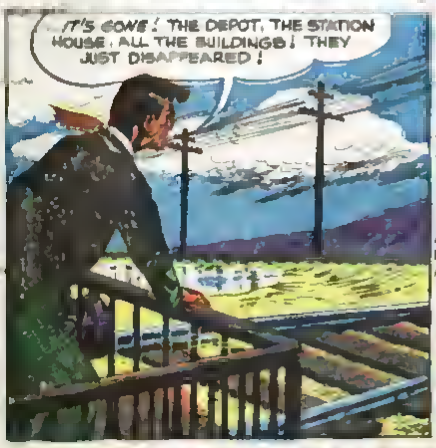
FUNNY HOW IT LOOKS LIKE THE SAME CAR ON THE TRAIN THAT I WAS ON LAST NIGHT. EVEN SOME OF THE FACES SEEM TO LOOK FAMILIAR!

COULD IT BE THAT THIS IS THE SAME TRAIN, THAT I HAVE RETURNED TO A PLACE ON THIS TRAIN THAT I SHOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT?

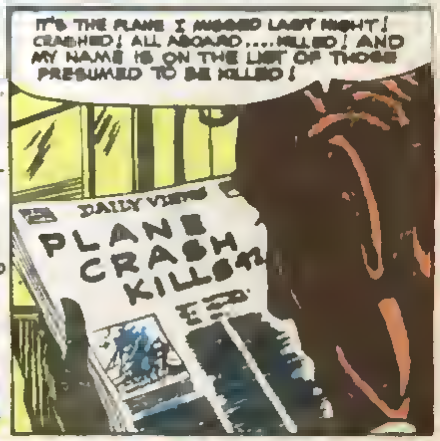
FRANK THOMPSON WALKED THE LENGTH OF THE TRAIN UNTIL HE EMERGED ON THE PLATFORM OF THE LAST CAR.

IT WAS AS IF SOMETHING DRAGGED HIM THERE FOR ONE LAST BACKWARD LOOK.

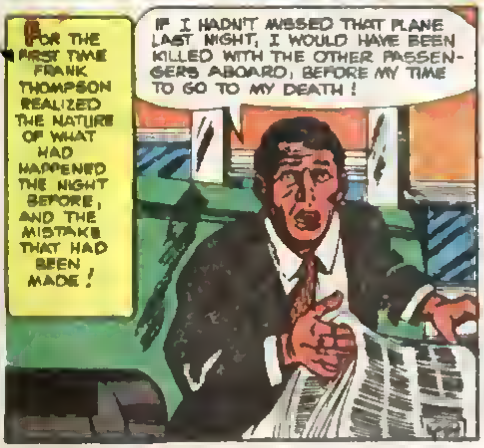




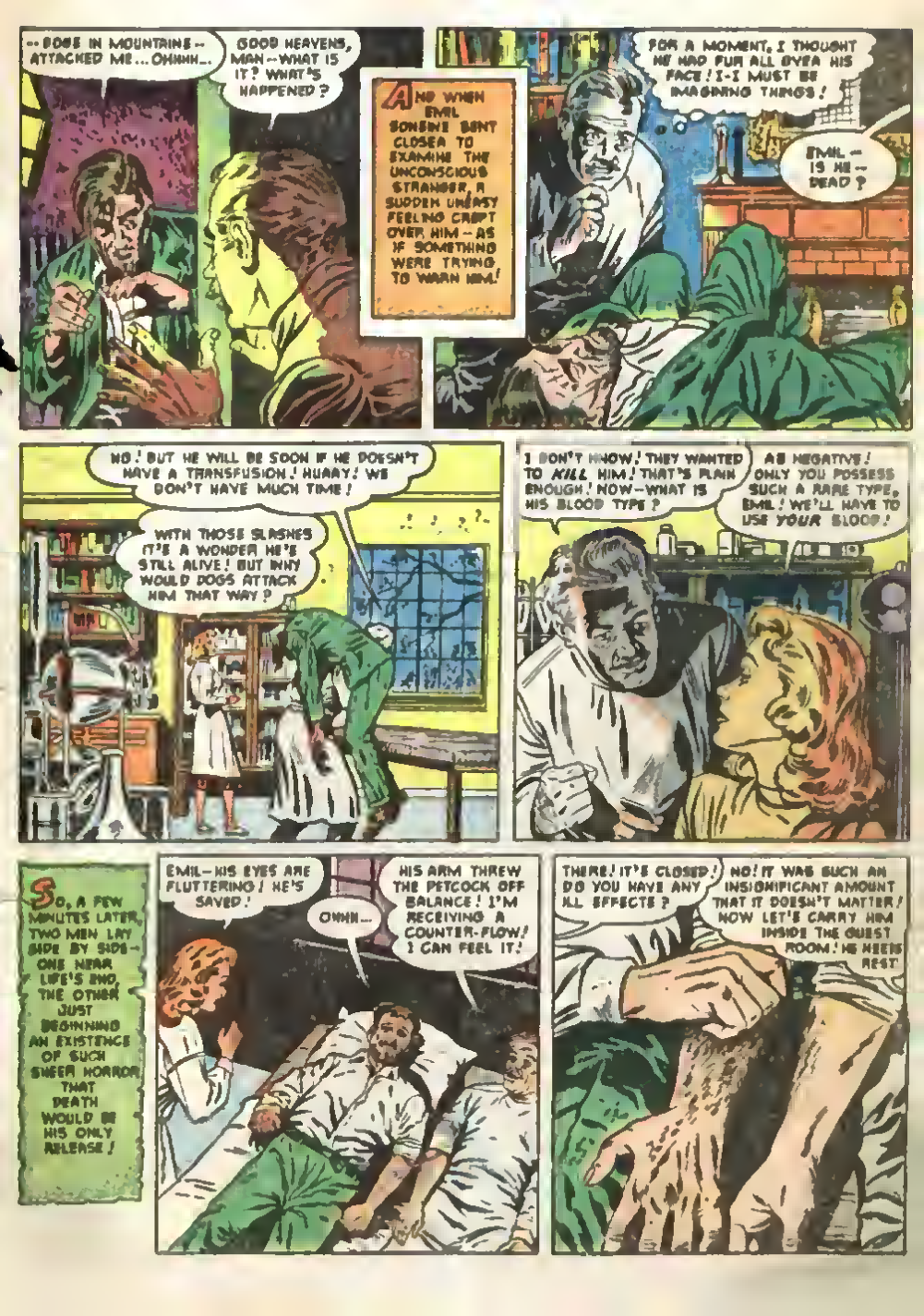
SHAKEN BY HIS EXPERIENCE, THOMPSON ENTERED THE COACH CAR AND SLUMPED INTO A SEAT. IDLY HE PICKED UP A MORNING NEWSPAPER AND GLANCED AT THE HEADLINE. HE FELT HIS HANDS TREMBLE!



FOR THE FIRST TIME FRANK THOMPSON REALIZED THE NATURE OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED THE NIGHT BEFORE, AND THE MISTAKE THAT HAD BEEN MADE !



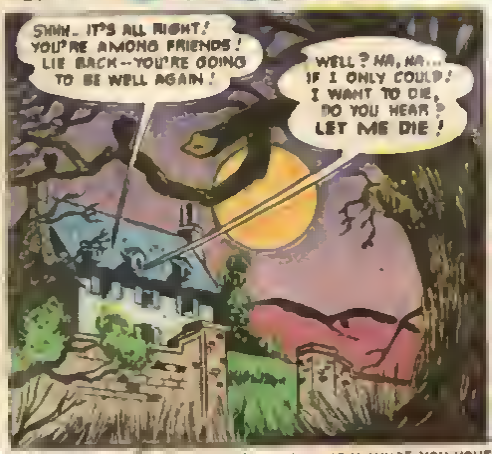
OUT OF THE BLACK PIT OF ETERNAL NIGHT CAME A HORROR TO PREY ON THE FLESH OF MEN--A CREATURE SPAWNED FROM EVIL THAT COULD NOT BE DESTROYED! AND DR EMIL SONSINE KNEW NOT WHERE TO TURN··· FOR WITHIN HIM WAS THIS TERRIBLE SIGN--THE GHASTLY, NEVER-ENDING, UNBREAKABLE···
CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF
GOOD LORD! NOTHING DESTROYS THAT MONSTER! IT WILL KILL US ALL!
I--I CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER--IT'S COMING FOR ME··· AIIIIII!
IN A SMALL, MOUNTAIN VILLAGE NEAR THE FRANCO-SPANISH BORDER, THE NOTED ZOOLOGIST, DR. EMIL SONSINE, AND HIS FIANCEE, NURSE RUTH LUBOCK, WERE WORKING VERY LATE ONE NIGHT!
ANOTHER FAILURE, RUTH···
I'M SORRY, EMIL! YOU TRIED SO HARD--!
THERE, THERE, DEAR! WE'LL BEGIN OVER AGAIN IN THE MORNING! RESEARCH WORK ISN'T EASY! OH! SOMEONE IS AT THE DOOR!
KNOCK KNOCK!

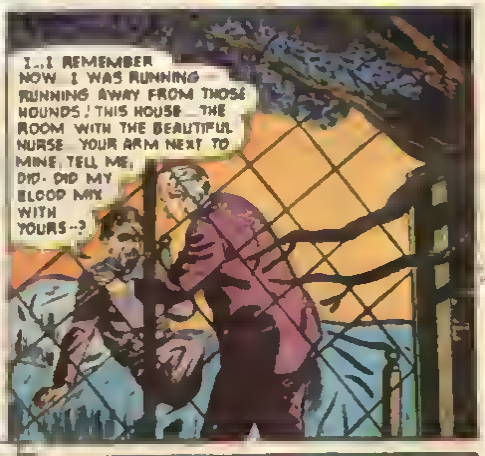

--DOGS IN MOUNTAINS--ATTACKED ME... OHHHH...
GOOD HEAVENS, MAN--WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENED?
AND WHEN EMIL SONEINE BENT CLOSER TO EXAMINE THE UNCONSCIOUS STRANGER, A SUDDEN UNEASY FEELING CREPT OVER HIM--AS IF SOMETHING WERE TRYING TO WARN HIM!
FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT HE HAD FUR ALL OVER HIS FACE! I-I MUST BE IMAGINING THINGS!
EMIL--IS HE--DEAD?
NO! BUT HE WILL BE SOON IF HE DOESN'T HAVE A TRANSFUSION! HURRY! WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!
WITH THOSE SLASHES IT'S A WONDER HE'S STILL ALIVE! BUT WHY WOULD DOGS ATTACK HIM THAT WAY?
I DON'T KNOW! THEY WANTED TO KILL HIM! THAT'S PLAIN ENOUGH! NOW--WHAT IS HIS BLOOD TYPE?
AB NEGATIVE! ONLY YOU POSSESS SUCH A RARE TYPE, EMIL! WE'LL HAVE TO USE YOUR BLOOD!
SO, A FEW MINUTES LATER, TWO MEN LAY SIDE BY SIDE--ONE NEAR LIFE'S END, THE OTHER JUST BEGINNING AN EXISTENCE OF SUCH SHEER HORROR THAT DEATH WOULD BE HIS ONLY RELEASE!
EMIL--HIS EYES ARE FLUTTERING! HE'S SAVED!
OHHH--
HIS ARM THREW THE PETCOCK OFF BALANCE! I'M RECEIVING A COUNTER-FLOW! I CAN FEEL IT!
THERE! IT'S CLOSED! DO YOU HAVE ANY ILL EFFECTS?
NO! IT WAS SUCH AN INSIGNIFICANT AMOUNT THAT IT DOESN'T MATTER! NOW LET'S CARRY HIM INSIDE THE GUEST ROOM! HE NEEDS REST

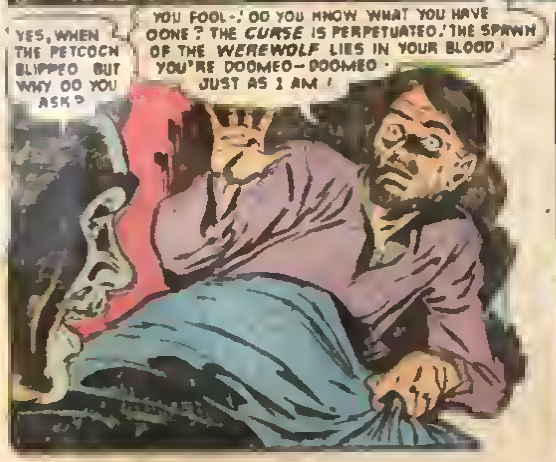
MOMENTS LATER, EMIL BONDINI SAW HIS BETROTHED TO THE DOOR, SATISFIED THAT HE HAD JUST SAVED A MAN'S LIFE....
AND YOU NEED REST ALSO, DEAR! GO HOME! I'LL CLEAN UP!
ALL RIGHT, EMIL! BUT YOU MARCH STRAIGHT TO BED AFTERWARDS! GOOD NIGHT!

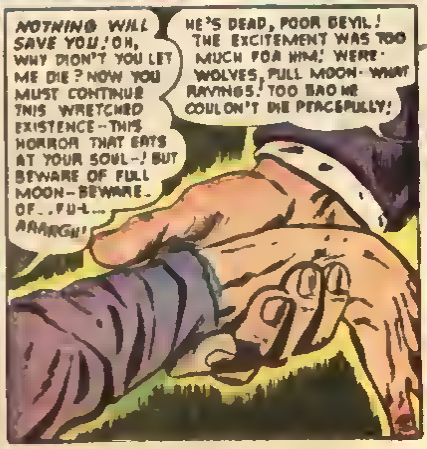
RUTH IS AN ASSET FOR ANY MAN! I'M LUCKY TO HAVE HER FOR MY FUTURE WIFE! SHE'S CAPABLE, EFFICIENT--
YAAAAAHH!

THAT SCREAM! IT CAME FROM THE GUEST ROOM--! THE MAN MUST BE IN MORTAL TERROR!
IT'S STILL FULL MOON OUTSIDE! OHH-- WHY DIDN'T I DIE? WHY--WHY?


SHHH. IT'S ALL RIGHT! YOU'RE AMONG FRIENDS! LIE BACK--YOU'RE GOING TO BE WELL AGAIN!
WELL? HA, HA... IF I ONLY COULD! I WANT TO DIE, DO YOU HEAR? LET ME DIE!


I..I REMEMBER NOW. I WAS RUNNING -- RUNNING AWAY FROM THOSE HOUNDS! THIS HOUSE -- THE ROOM WITH THE BEAUTIFUL NURSE.. YOUR ARM NEXT TO MINE. TELL ME, DID- DID MY BLOOD MIX WITH YOURS--?

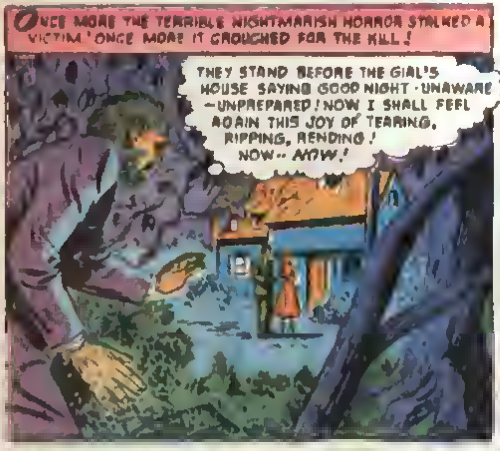

YES, WHEN THE PETCOCK SLIPPED BUT WHY DO YOU ASK?
YOU FOOL-! DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE DONE? THE CURSE IS PERPETUATED! THE SPAWN OF THE WEREWOLF LIES IN YOUR BLOOD! YOU'RE DOOMED--DOOMED- JUST AS I AM!


NOTHING WILL SAVE YOU! OH, WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME DIE? NOW YOU MUST CONTINUE THIS WRETCHED EXISTENCE--THIS HORROR THAT EATS AT YOUR SOUL-! BUT BEWARE OF FULL MOON--BEWARE- OF..FU-L... AAARGH!
HE'S DEAD, POOR DEVIL! THE EXCITEMENT WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIM! WERE-WOLVES, FULL MOON- WHAT RAVINGS! TOO BAD HE COULDN'T DIE PEACEFULLY!

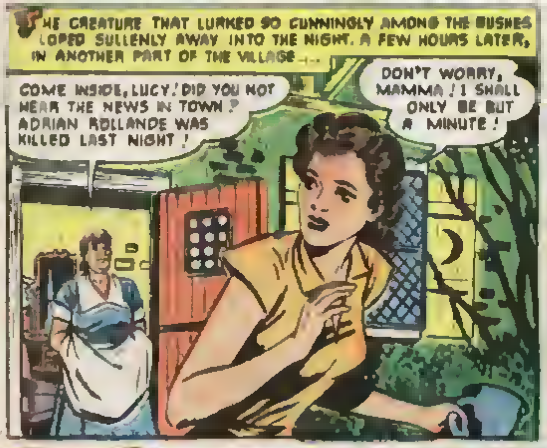
NEVERTHELESS, DR. EMIL SONSINE HAD A TROUBLED SLEEP THAT NIGHT. BUT NEXT MORNING, FACING RUTH AND HIS YOUNG ASSISTANT, JON FARNOT, HE SEEMED HIS OLD SELF!
--AND THE MAN DIED BEFORE I COULD ASK HIM ANYTHING ELSE!
NOR DO THE VILLAGERS KNOW OF HIM, SIR!
THEY PROCEEDED ON TO THE LABORATORY, AND--
MOST LIKELY HE WAS A VAGABOND LOST IN THE HILLS! AT ANY RATE, WE SHALL NEVER FIND OUT WHY HE WAS ATTACKED! OH, WELL-- LET'S START OUR WORK FOR TODAY!
EMIL-- YOU LOOK TIRED! WAS THERE ANY TROUBLE AFTER I LEFT?
NO, MY DEAR! IT'S JUST THAT I'M A LITTLE DISTURBED THAT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING MORE FOR THAT POOR FELLOW! NOW-- SHALL WE PROCEED?
THE ANIMALS ARE RESTLESS, DOCTOR!
WHY-- THEY'RE SNARLING AT YOU, EMIL!
THEY ARE ONLY HUNGRY! I FORGOT TO FEED THEM THIS MORNING!
BUT I DID FEED THEM! STRANGE THAT I SHOULD FEEL SO... SO PECULIAR TODAY... I'VE GOT TO CONTROL MYSELF-- MUST CONCENTRATE ON MY WORK...
SOMEHOW, THE DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST MANAGED TO HIDE HIS GROWING PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT IN THE HOURS THAT FOLLOWED. BUT THAT NIGHT, ALONE IN HIS STUDY...
"TODAY I HARDLY KNEW WHAT I WAS DOING! LAST NIGHT'S DEATH AFFECTED ME! I DID NOT TELL THE OTHERS ABOUT THE STRANGER'S RAVINGS... AND ALL DAY I WAS BOTHERED BY A SPLITTING HEADACHE..."
THEN-- IT HAPPENED! THE PEN DROPPED FROM EMIL SONSINE'S SLOWLY-CHANGING FINGERS! HIS SPINE BEGAN TO CURVE -- HIS TEETH PROTRUDED FROM HIS MOUTH!
MY NAILS ARE GROWING -- THERE IS FUR ON MY FACE -- I... I'M CHANGING --!

WHERE ONCE SAT A MAN NOW CROUCHED A CREATURE OF SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH -- A TERRIBLE, GIGANTIC, SLAVERING BEAST -- A MONSTER OF DEATH -- A WEREWOLF!
ARRRROWR!
I FEEL WONDERFULLY ELATED! THE NIGHT IS CALLING ME! I SHALL ANSWER IT -- FOR I MUST KILL -- KILL!!
AND NOT FAR AWAY IN TOWN, ADRIAN ROLLANDE, A VERY POPULAR FELLOW AMONG HIS TOWN ACQUAINTENCES, WAS TRKING LEAVE OF THEM:
NO, ADRIAN! DON'T FOAGET OUA MEETING TOMOARROW NIGHT!
THAT I WILL NOT, MY FRIENDS! WE SHALL DRINK A NUNDRED TOASTS! GOOD NIGHT!
TOOSH! MARIE WILL BE FURIOUS FOA MY COMING HOME LATE! AH -- I WILL TAKE THIS SNORT CUT THROUGH THE FOREST!
RRRROWR!
WHAT WAS THAT? THERE IS SOMEONE BENIND THAT TREE! IT IS A HUGE ANIMAL! SACRE BLEU -- A LOUP GAROU -- A WEREWOLF -- NO! NO! GET AWAY FROM ME! HELP!!
GRRRROWRR!
Y-A-A-A-H!
THERE YOU LIE, MY VICTIM -- QUIET AND OBEDIENT! YOU ARE MY FIRST! HOW SWEET THIS IS -- HOW STRONG I AM! THE BLOOD POUNDS IN MY VEINS -- I LUST FOR ANOTHER -- AND ANOTHER! NOTHING CAN STOP ME! I REIGN SUPREME! HA, HA, HA...

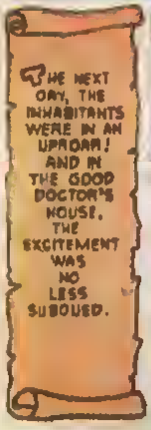
BUT NEXT MORNING, IN THE STUDY OF EMIL SONSINE, A SHOCKED MAN SLUMPED IN A CHAIR, HIS HEAD BURIED IN HIS ARMS.
IT..WAS TRUE THEN! I TURNED INTO A... A BEAST--I KILLED LAST NIGHT! I MUST THINK--MUST FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS--!
SUDDENLY--MUFFLED VOICES CAME FROM THE HALL-WAY.
WE CAN'T GO ON THIS WAY, DARLING. WE LOVE EACH OTHER! PLEASE--LET'S TELL HIM! HE DESERVES THAT AT LEAST!
NOT YET, JON! DEAR, DEAR EMIL! I DON'T WANT TO HURT HIM!
ALL RIGHT, RUTH! BUT WE MUST DO SOMETHING SOON! IT'S NOT FAIR TO ALL OF US!
YES, I KNOW..BUT HOW CAN YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS SO KIND--SO GOOD--THAT YOU DON'T LOVE HIM? I NEED TIME...
RUTH--MY RUTH--AND JON! I..I WAS A FOOL NOT TO SEE IT--AN OLD FOOL! BUT I MUST NOT STAND IN THEIR WAY! THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR THEM--MINE IS--DEAD--
THE DAY DRAGGED ON SLOWLY FOR EMIL SONSINE--BUT HE HID HIS SADNESS APTLY. AND WHEN THE YOUNG COUPLE LEFT THAT NIGHT....
NOW PERFECTLY THEY ARE MATCHED--HANDSOME YOUTH TO GLORIOUS BEAUTY! I WISH THEM WELL! I--NO--THE FULL MOON IS UPON ME! I'M CHANGING AGAIN--
RRROWR...I'LL TEACH THEM TO MOCK ME BEHIND MY BACK! MY OTHER SELF--THAT MEWLING WEAKLING--WOULD FORGIVE THEM! BUT I--HA, HA--WILL TEAR THEM TO PIECES!


ONCE MORE THE TERRIBLE NIGHTMARISH HORROR STALKED A VICTIM! ONCE MORE IT CROUCHED FOR THE KILL!
THEY STAND BEFORE THE GIRL'S HOUSE SAYING GOOD NIGHT - UNAWARE - UNPREPARED! NOW I SHALL FEEL AGAIN THIS JOY OF TEARING, RIPPING, RENDING! NOW-- NOW!

BON SOIR, MES AMIS! IT IS NOT WISE FOR YOU TO BE OUT SO LATE TONIGHT! THERE IS A WILD BEAST LOOSE IN THE FOREST!
THANK YOU, CONSTABLE! WE SHALL BE CAREFUL!

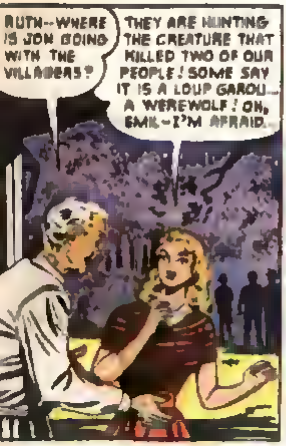

THE CREATURE THAT LURKED SO CUNNINGLY AMONG THE BUSHES LOPED SULLENLY AWAY INTO THE NIGHT. A FEW HOURS LATER, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE VILLAGE--
COME INSIDE, LUCY! DID YOU NOT HEAR THE NEWS IN TOWN? ADRIAN ROLLANDE WAS KILLED LAST NIGHT!
DON'T WORRY, MAMMA! I SHALL ONLY BE BUT A MINUTE!

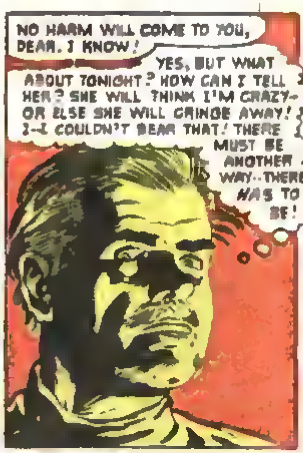
HUMPF! WHEN WILL SHE LEARN THAT I'M GROWN UP NOW? ALL I WANT TO DO IS FETCH SOME WATER FROM THE WELL! I--
AAIIIIEEE!

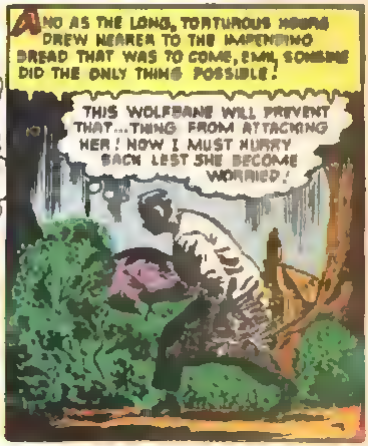

THE NEXT DAY, THE INHABITANTS WERE IN AN UPROAR! AND IN THE GOOD DOCTOR'S HOUSE, THE EXCITEMENT WAS NO LESS SUBDUED.

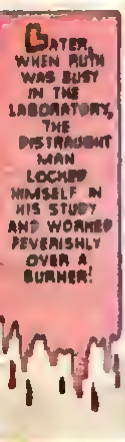
JON--ARE YOU COMING WITH US? WE CANNOT DELAY MUCH LONGER!
LEAD ON, HUGO! I'M WITH YOU!

DEAREST--PLEASE BE CAREFUL! FIRST ADRIAN --THEN THAT SWEET GIRL! OH, WE WERE SUPPOSED TO TELL EMIL ABOUT US TODAY!
IT WILL HAVE TO WAIT, DARLING! I'LL BE BACK BY EVENING! DR SONSINE WILL PROTECT YOU UNTIL THEN!


RUTH--WHERE IS JON GOING WITH THE VILLAGERS?
THEY ARE HUNTING THE CREATURE THAT KILLED TWO OF OUR PEOPLE! SOME SAY IT IS A LOUP GAROU... A WEREWOLF! OH, EMIL--I'M AFRAID...

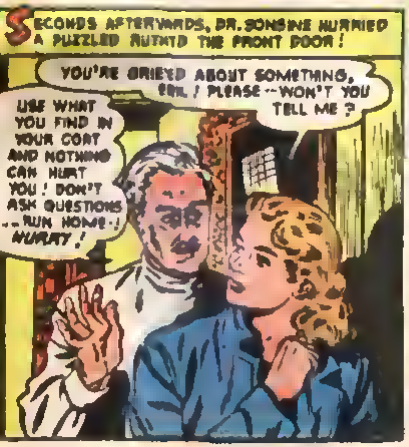

NO HARM WILL COME TO YOU, DEAR. I KNOW!
YES, BUT WHAT ABOUT TONIGHT? HOW CAN I TELL HER? SHE WILL THINK I'M CRAZY--OR ELSE SHE WILL GRIND AWAY! I--I COULDN'T BEAR THAT! THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY--THERE HAS TO BE!

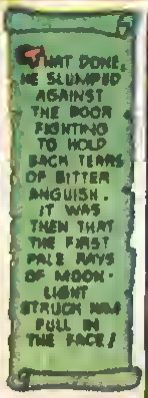

AND AS THE LONG, TORTUROUS HOURS DREW NEARER TO THE HAPPENING DREAD THAT WAS TO COME, EMIL SONSINE DID THE ONLY THING POSSIBLE!
THIS WOLFBANE WILL PREVENT THAT...THING FROM ATTACKING HER! NOW I MUST HURRY BACK LEST SHE BECOME WORRIED!


LATER, WHEN RUTH WAS BUSY IN THE LABORATORY, THE DISTRAUGHT MAN LOCKED HIMSELF IN HIS STUDY AND WORKED FEVERISHLY OVER A BURNER!

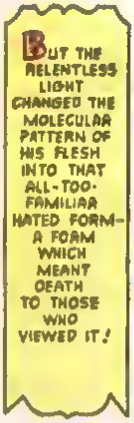
I'LL MELT THIS MEDALLION INTO SILVER BULLETS! "FOR SAVING LIVES THROUGH SCIENCE." IT READS...

YES--I SHALL SAVE LIVES--BY NOT KILLING AGAIN! NOW TO SLIP THIS WOLFBANE AND THE REVOLVER INTO RUTH'S COAT. FINISHED! PERHAPS I CAN STILL WARN HER! IT WILL SOON BE FULL MOON!


SECONDS AFTERWARDS, DR. SONSINE HURRIED A PUZZLED RUTH TO THE FRONT DOOR!
YOU'RE GRIEVED ABOUT SOMETHING, EMIL! PLEASE--WON'T YOU TELL ME?
USE WHAT YOU FIND IN YOUR COAT AND NOTHING CAN HURT YOU! DON'T ASK QUESTIONS ...RUN HOME! HURRY!


WHAT DONE, HE SLUMPED AGAINST THE DOOR FIGHTING TO HOLD BACK TEARS OF BITTER ANGUISH. IT WAS THEN THAT THE FIRST PALE RAYS OF MOONLIGHT STRUCK HIM FULL IN THE FACE!

N-NO! I CAN'T GO THROUGH THAT HELL AGAIN!


BUT THE RELENTLESS LIGHT CHANGED THE MOLECULAR PATTERN OF HIS FLESH INTO THAT ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR HATED FORM—A FOAM WHICH MEANT DEATH TO THOSE WHO VIEWED IT!

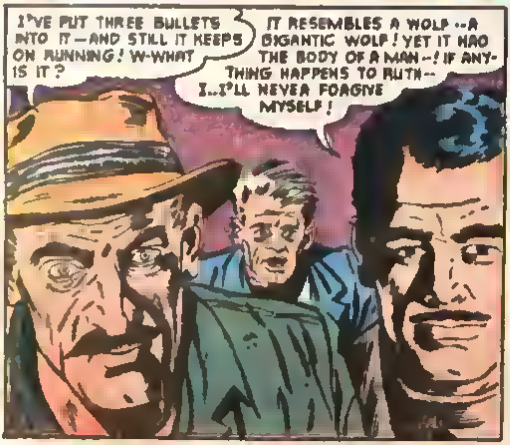
SHE WON'T ESCAPE THIS TIME! NEITHER SILVER BULLETS NOR WOLFBANE CAN STOP ME!

SWIFTLY IT PADDED ACROSS THE LAWNS... SILENTLY IT MERGED IN AND OUT OF THE DISTORTED SHADOWS OF GIANT BOLES, FOLLOWING, ALWAYS FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF THE GIRL!
EMIL LOOKED SO.. SO STRANGE! OH--SOMETHING IS BEHIND ME!

RRRRRRROW!
GOOD HEAVENS! DON'T TOUCH ME--!

RRRROWR.. DID THAT WEAK FOOL OF A DOCTOR THINK THAT I COULDN'T RIP OFF HER COAT?
OH-HH...

LOOK--! THERE IT IS!
NO, HUGO--! HOLD YOUR FIRE! THAT--THAT THING'S GOT RUTH!
BANG! BANG!


I'VE PUT THREE BULLETS INTO IT—AND STILL IT KEEPS ON RUNNING! W-WHAT IS IT?
IT RESEMBLES A WOLF--A GIGANTIC WOLF! YET IT HAD THE BODY OF A MAN--! IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO RUTH-- I--I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF!

RRRROWRR!
NO, JON! STAY HERE! YOU CAN'T KILL IT! IT IS A WEREWOLF!
I'VE GOT TO TAKE THAT CHANCE!

RRRROWR...
UHHW - GREAT SCOTT - IT'S GOT THE STRENGTH OF A DOZEN MEN - I - I'LL TRY TO HOLD IT BACK! GRAB THE GIRL! QUICKLY - !
BANG! BANG!
SHOOT IT! I - I CAN'T HOLD ON MUCH LONGER... I'M WEAKENING....
IT WON'T DIE, I TELL YOU! NOTHING WILL DESTROY THIS MONSTER! WE ARE ALL DOOMED
WAIT! THIS REVOLVER THAT'S FALLEN FROM THE GIRL'S COAT! IT CONTAINS SILVER BULLETS! ONE DROPPED OUT
JUST THEN, THE CREATURE CAUGHT SIGHT OF HUGO'S DISCOVERY, AND WITH A TERRIBLE SNARL OF UTTER HATE, CHARGED THE MASS OF DETERMINED MEN! SUDDENLY....
AAHRRRROWRR!
HUGO - YOU DIE IT! IT'S FALLING!
BANG!
EMIL!! YOU!!!
YES..IT WAS - I HUGO - THANK YOU FOR SHOOTING ME..THIS CURSE WILL DIE WITH ME FOREVER! MY DIARY WILL EXPLAIN... JON, RUTH... I'VE LEFT YOU EVERYTHING...LIVE HAPPY, MY DEAR ONES BLESS YOU BLESS Y-O-U....
OH, JON! HE'S DEAD...
YES, DEAREST! BUT WE WILL FORGET THAT A MONSTER EVER EXISTED! INSTEAD, WE'LL CHERISH THE MEMORY OF THIS GREAT MAN - FOR ALL OF US LOVED HIM... IN OUR HEARTS!
BUT FINAL VICTORY WAS EMIL SONSINE'S BECAUSE THE KINDNESS THAT STILL MOLDED HIS SOUL HAD CONQUERED IN THE END THE CURSE WHICH LURKED IN HIS BLOOD!

UNKNOWN TERROR

By John C. Adler

"I CAN'T understand this, Mary. There's something weird going on."

Richard Burton peered with narrowed eyes at the large anthill he had been observing. "Now watch," he said, "that small opening. In just a moment one of these little fellows will come out. See what happens to him."

The gathering dusk was making all objects less distinct. Outlines were softening, and the sweet country smells seemed more poignant to Mary as her senses alerted to meet mankind's oldest enemy, darkness. She bent forward and focused her eyes upon the anthill. A small black head appeared, antennae waving, then two slender front legs, scrambling a little as they struggled to lift the black pinch-waist body over the rim of the nest.

Back legs were now at the rim of the hole as the ant started its run downward, along the side of the nest. Mary saw little flicks of dirt fly outward as it gathered momentum. Suddenly the tiny animal stopped. The slender threads of its two antennae gave a sort of convulsive shake, quivered, and then became, like the rest of the body, motionless. It was as if an invisible wall, invisible to her eyes at least, had suddenly arisen in front of the ant.

Mary glanced at her husband. "What happened to it?" she asked.

"Watch."

Mary looked again, and saw that the small black body was losing the rigidity of its form. There seemed to be some sort of softening process taking place, as might happen to a piece of moulded taffy left too near a hot stove.

She felt a sickish feeling inside her, and brushed her hand across her eyes, then looked again, amazed, horrified. The ant grew bubbly, liquid. And then it slowly disappeared.

Another ant came over the rim of the nest opening, was suddenly stopped in its motion, softened, melted, and disappeared. Then another, and still another. Mary did not speak, simply stared at this drama, fascinated, feeling the terror which needs no words to convey its presence from one person to another.

Richard was the first to break the silence. "I've watched fifty or sixty ants come out of the nest during the last few minutes," he said. "And the same thing has happened to each of them. It must be some strange contagious disease, some sudden-acting wasting process like . . . I don't know . . . like . . ."

"Like black magic," Mary suggested. "Like a witch's curse?"

Richard laughed a rather thin laugh. "Don't be ridiculous, Mary. Those things are only storybook stuff. And this . . ." he pointed to the anthill, "is real. No, there'll be an explanation, all right. Although," he added as an afterthought, "in my fourteen years of studying and teaching biology I've never heard of animal tissue suddenly disappearing. I'll come out here first thing in the morning and try to make some sense out of it. Maybe it'll lead to something big." He smiled at his frightened wife. "Let's go home now, Mary. It's almost dark and we haven't fed Ginger. That dog goes wild when her supper is late. Come on." He linked arms with his wife and they started down the woodland path which led to their summer bungalow.

A red cocker spaniel came out of the house and ran toward them, barking wildly, a little accusingly, it seemed to Mary, because his supper was late. "Ginger's a demanding little devil," she thought, smiling to herself.

Halfway between them and the house, Ginger came to a sudden stop, her bark freezing in her throat. Mary rushed forward, a wild, crazy memory of the ants in her mind. It was nearly dark now, but she could see, as she ran, that the dog's body was collapsing, and losing its form. When she reached the spot where he had been standing, felt for the small body, her hands touched only empty air. The dog had quite disappeared.

"Richard," she called wildly, "Richard." It's happened to Ginger too," and she broke into a wild sobbing. Richard was at her side now, holding her in his arms, comforting her, telling her soothing things which she knew he

aid only out of his own fright and mystification.

When her sobbing had become quieter, and he could speak, she asked Richard what it was. "Could it be me?" she asked. "Could there be something about me, some radiation which destroys things?"

"Well," he said, laughing. "I'm here. You haven't destroyed me. Look." And he stood up and made a great show of flexing his arms, running in place, and ended by doing a deep knee bend. "Does that look like a man on the way to being snuffed out like a candle?"

"No," she said, laughing. "But don't joke about it."

Next morning they found that the chickens in the yard behind the bungalow were gone, and Mr. Allie, their nearest neighbor, stopped by to ask them if they had seen his horse. "I can't find it," Allie said. "I can't understand. It was inside a fenced-in pasture. Someone must have stolen it."

But Richard and Mary knew that the horse had not been stolen. And yet how could they tell Mr. Allie what they knew, that some weird forces were about, dissolving, evaporating bodies as the sun will dissolve and evaporate snow.

When Allie had gone, Richard suggested that they have a look around. "If there were only bodies left to dissect," he said, "I wouldn't feel so utterly helpless. We might find the germ then, or the virus, or get some sort of idea of what this weird force is that is operating around here. And it must be confined to this area," he added, "for I've listened to several News programs on the radio. There's not been a mention of it."

They walked back along the woodland path, heading toward the anthill. "Maybe we'll see something there," he said.

Speckles of bright sunlight fell upon the anthill through the bright green leaves overhead. Mary approached the nest timidly, fearful of what she might see. But she found only the busy lines of ants, winding up and down the mound, one entering and one leaving, intent upon their endless business of repairing the home, feeding the young ants, laying in stores of food. It was as if nothing might have happened to their brethren the night before.

"Mary!" Richard called to her sharply from the woods. "Mary, come here quickly!" She rushed toward the sound of his voice and saw that he was holding a little gnome by the shoulder. The tiny man had a gun in his hand, an old-fashioned gun, one of those ancient fowling pieces with a wide-flaring muzzle.

Richard was panting, for it is not easy to hold a struggling little gnome. "Oh Mary," he gasped. "I'm glad you got here." He twisted his body and threw the gnome to the ground. "Here, sit on him." Mary sat, right across the waist of the gnome, who stopped struggling momentarily as Richard wrested the gun from his hands, broke open the breach and extracted a shell that looked like a shotgun cartridge.

"What kind of gun is that?" he asked the gnome. "You've been shooting it, haven't you?" The man nodded, and Richard went on. "What did you shoot it at?"

"I had only six shells," he said. "And I used four of them. The first, just to practice my aim, on that anthill over there. And the second on a dog. Then I shot at a horse in a pasture and some chickens in a yard." He giggled softly. "But they didn't do any real harm. They didn't even make a noise, or a flash!"

RICHARD reached into the gnome's pocket and extracted two cartridges. "You have done much more harm than you seem to think," he said. "I am going to take that strange gun away from you before you cause any more trouble." He reached out to grab the gun.

The little gnome suddenly started to struggle again, and he held onto the gun for dear life. Richard finally managed to get the weapon away from the tiny man, but at the last second, just as he wrenched it free, there was a slight jolt and a puff of smoke. Richard hesitated for just a moment, then took the gun in both hands and started to break it over his knee. To his amazement, it melted in his hands and then just seemed to dissolve.

"What sort of weird joke is this?" he asked the little man. "Do you think . . ." He never finished the sentence. Instead, he stared, horror stricken. For the gnome has disappeared into thin air, right before his eyes!

THE END

The DEVIL'S PRIZE

IN JUNE OF 1951, A MAN NAMED JOHN DIRGE, OF GOOD HEALTH AND SOUND MIND, HAD HIMSELF COMMITTED TO AN INSANE ASYLUM TO CONCEAL AN EMBEZZLEMENT HE HAD PERPETRATED. ON HIS FIRST NIGHT IN THE ASYLUM HE WAS GIVEN AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE!

MARKHAM! YOU'RE MY LAWYER! HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO STAY IN THIS RAT-TRAP TO BE CLEAR OF TROUBLE?

TELL HIM THE TRUTH! TELL HIM IT'S A DOUBLE-CROSS AND THAT HIS FAKE INSANITY IS GOING TO BECOME THE REAL THING!

AS THE WORDS OF HIS SECRETARY BEGAN TO SPILL FORTH, A CHILL WENT THROUGH JOHN DIRGE. A PICTURE OF HIMSELF ROTTING AWAY IN THE ASYLUM BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE IN HIS MIND!

YOU COMMITTED ME, DR. AGATH! YOU CAN GET ME OUT WHEN YOU WANT! WHAT'S THE DEAL?

I... AH... JOHN... IT'S THIS WAY! THERE'S NO HURRY FOR YOU TO GET OUT! WE—AH—WILL LOOK AFTER THE MONEY YOUR INTERESTS!

DIKE HAMMER BLOWS, THE LYING WORDS SLAMMED HOME INTO JOHN DIRGE'S BRAIN. HIS SECRETARY, HIS LEWYER AND HIS DOCTOR HAS WORKED TOGETHER ON THIS. THEY WERE MAKING HIM THE GOAT WHILE THEY MADE OFF WITH THE MONEY HE HAD STOLEN!

WHY... YOU RAT! YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME! YOU'VE LOCKED ME UP IN HERE!

AGH... MY HEART.... THE PAIN... AGH!

I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS, ALL THREE OF YOU!

EASY! RELAX! YOU CAN SEE HE'S DEFINITELY THE VIOLENT TYPE OF PARANOIC! THE PERSECUTION COMPLEX! ALWAYS THINK THEY'RE SANE!

HE GAVE ME A BAD TURN THERE. I HAVE A WEAKENED HEART!

THEY ALL FILED OUT AND DIRGE WAS LEFT ALONE, ALONE WITH THE HORRIBLE KNOWLEDGE THAT HE HAD TRAPPED HIMSELF!

I CAN'T STAY HERE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT! I WON'T GROW OLD HERE AND ROT AWAY INTO A WRECK OF A MAN IN THIS ROOM!

MONA... MARKHAM... DR. ROBTA! I'D TRADE MY SOUL FOR A CHANCE TO DESTROY THEM! IF ONLY... IF ONLY I COULD SE SOME ONE NEAR THEM. SOME ONE THEY TRUSTED!

DIRGE'S ...NSFUL WORDS WERE A SWEET EMPTATION TO HE EVIL ONE, N OPPORTU-ITY NOT TO IS DENIED! IRGE LITTLE OUGHT THAT IS OFFER TO RADE HIS SOUL FOR EVENGE WOULD E ACCEPTED! T THE DOOR O HIS ROOM ENED, AND..

I DEAL IN SOULS AND YOU HAVE OFFERED TO TRADE YOURS. IN RETURN FOR YOUR SOUL, I WILL GIVE YOU THE POWER TO ENTER THE BODIES OF ANY THREE PEOPLE YOU CHOOSE... AND HAVE MASTERY OVER THEIR BODIES.

HE MUST BE ONE OF THE INSANE PATIENTS HERE! I'D BETTER HUMOR HIM OR HE MIGHT BECOME VIOLENT!

ACCEPTED!

ALL RIGHT! IT'S A DEAL!

ALTHOUGH HE TRIED TO LAUGH IT OFF AND DRIVE IT OUT OF HIS MIND, THE MEMORY OF THE STRANGE VISITOR PERSISTED THAT EVENING ...
HOPE YOU LIKE YOUR FIRST MEAL HERE, MR. BIRCH! IF THERE'S ANYTHING SPECIAL YOU WANT, LET ME KNOW!
WHAT I WANT IS ESCAPE AND REVENGE! IF ONLY I COULD REALLY ENTER HIS BODY AS THAT MADMAN SUGGESTED! I WOULD BE ABLE TO WALK OUT OF HERE!
AS SOON AS BIRCH WILLED HIMSELF TO BECOME A PART OF THIS MAN, AN EXTRAORDINARY THING OCCURRED!
IT'S REALLY HAPPENING! I-I'M BECOMING HIM!
ARGH!
AT THE PRECISE INSTANT WHEN BIRCH TOOK OVER THE ORDERLY'S BODY COMPLETELY, A STRANGE THING HAPPENED. THE ROOM ABOUT HIM SWAM-FOAMED. HE ENTERED ANOTHER WORLD, A DEMI-WORLD OF HALF-LIGHT, A WORLD THAT WAS NEITHER LIFE NOR DEATH!
WHERE AM I? WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME?
COME HERE! JOIN US! BE ONE WITH DEATH!
NO! THERE IS NO TIME! THERE IS TIME ONLY FOR MURDER!
HE IS TOO STRONG NOW! THERE IS TOO MUCH OF LIFE ABOUT HIM NOW! BUT... HE WILL YET FALL VICTIM TO US!
MONA, MAHMAN AND DR. AORTA ARE WAITING FOR ME! I MUST ESCAPE TO REVENGE MYSELF ON THEM!

DIAGE WAS TOO POWERFUL FOR THE DEMO-WORLD THAT HAD TRIED TO CLAIM HIM AT THE INSTANT WHEN HIS WILL AND THE ORDERLY'S WERE WEAKENED BY THEIR STRUGGLE! ONCE AGAIN, HE WAS IN THE REAL WORLD, WITHIN THE ORDERLY'S BODY!

ME - JOHN DIAGE - IN ANOTHER MAN'S BODY WEARING HIS FLESH AND BONES - HIS CLOTHES .. HIS FACE.. USING HIS MIND! IF ONLY I COULD UNDERSTAND THE HORROR I SAW THE MOMENT I TOOK HIS MIND OVER, MY WILL DRAINED AND WEAKENED!

BUT TIME WAS MOVING FAST AND JOHN DIAGE WAS CONSUMED BY A THIRST FOR REVENGE! HE SMOKE FROM HIS ROOM, SLIPPED OUT OF THE ASYLUM AND HEADED FOR FREEDOM!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING OUT NOW, CHARLIE?

I HAVE TO GO INTO TOWN! THE SUPERVISOR WANTS ME TO BUY SOMETHING! I WON'T BE LONG!

I MUST NOT SNEAK INTO A RUN OR I'LL AROUSE SUSPICION! AS SOON AS I CAN GET TO A SECLUDED SPOT, THOUGH, I'LL GET OUT OF THIS BODY!

DIAGE MOVED SWIFTLY DOWN A SIDE STREET. THE LONG, DEAD SHADOWS OF AN ALLEY BECKONED, OFFERING ITS PROTECTIVE PRIVACY, AND DIAGE STEPPED INTO ITS BLACKNESS!

NOW I GOT TO DISENGAGE MYSELF! THIS AIN'T AS BAD AS IT WAS, GOING IN!

THERE! NOW I KNOW I'M FREE! AND I'M MYSELF AGAIN... TO GO AND KILL!

MY OWN HOUSE IS THE BEST PLACE TO LOOK FOR THEM! THE THREE OF THEM ARE PROBABLY THERE NOW, EATING MY FOOD, DRINKING MY LIQUOR!

HOW DID I GET HERE? THE LAST THING I REMEMBER IS ENTERING THE PATIENT'S ROOM!

JOHN DIRGE SCUTTLED THROUGH THE NIGHT, A MAN BENT ON AVENGING TRAITORISM WITH MURDER! AT LAST HE CAME TO HIS HOME, AND HIS FEET PADDED ACROSS THE LAWN UNTIL HE STOOD IN THE SHADOWS OUTSIDE A GROUND-FLOOR WINDOW!

I'LL BE BACK IN JUST A MOMENT! I'M GOING TO PHONE AND FIND OUT WHY DR. AORTA IS LATE!

I'LL USE THEM FIRST BEFORE I KILL THEM! I MUST GET THEM TO SIGN PAPERS AUTHORIZING MY LEGAL RELEASE FROM THE ASYLUM!

HOW'S MY CHANCE! I'LL HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY BEFORE MONA RETURNS!

DIRGE CLOSED IN ON MARKHAM, THE LAWYER. THERE WAS NO HINT OF MERCY OR COMPASSION IN DIRGE'S GLITTERING EYES!

FUNNY! I HAVE A STRANGE FEELING! LIKE A COLD CHILL PASSING THROUGH ME! AS IF DEATH WAS TOUCHING ME WITH HIS ICY HAND!

AND AS BEFORE, AT THE MOMENT WHEN DIRGE'S WILL WAS STRONGEST, FULLY OCCUPIED WITH THE STRUGGLE TO DOMINATE MARKHAM'S MIND, HE SLIPPED OUT OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT, ONCE AGAIN INTO AN EXISTENCE OF FANTASY AND HORROR!

COME TO THE WORLD OF THE DEAD! DEATH WAITS TO TAKE YOU IN HER ARMS!

WHY DO YOU FIGHT? AIEEE!

HE IS STILL TOO STRONG!

I TELL YOU... NO!

I CAN'T GIVE IN TO THEM! I HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE REAL WORLD!

THERE WILL BE ANOTHER TIME!

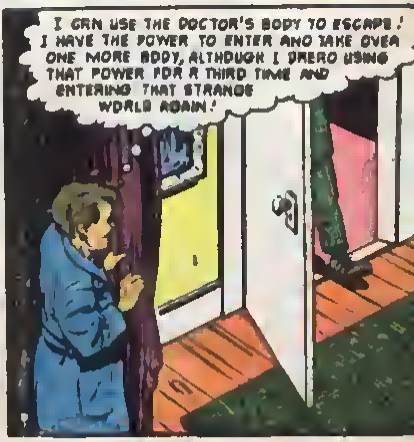
HE WILL BE OURS...YET!

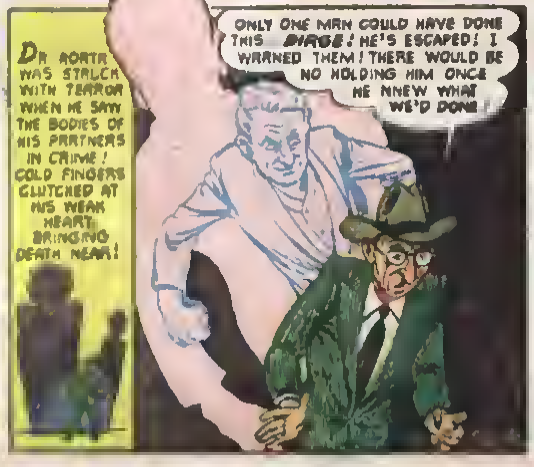
DIRGE'S WILL WAS STILL TOO STRONG FOR THE DEMONS OF THE STRANGE DEMI-WORLD! THE TRANSITION INTO MARKHAM'S BODY COMPLETED, HE RETURNED TO THE WORLD OF LIFE, OF REALITY!

HORROR! THOSE BONY, YAWNING MOUTHS... THOSE WAITING GRAVES...THAT BECKONED ME! I MUST NOT GO BACK! I FEAR WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I USE MY POWER A THIRD TIME!

DIRGE FORCED HIS NERVES TO STEADY THEMSELVES. HE HAD A LOT OF WORK TO DO YET THAT NIGHT, AND MONA WAS ENTERING THE ROOM. HE HAD TO FACE HER, AND CONVINCE HER!
YOU LOOK SO STRANGE, MARKHAM! WHAT IS IT?
I'VE HAD A CHANGE OF HEART, MONA! WE CAN'T DO THIS TO DIRGE, LEAVING HIM TO ROT IN THE ASYLUM! HE'S AN OLD FRIEND!
WE CAN GET DR. AGATA TO SIGN THE NECESSARY PAPERS CERTIFYING THAT HE IS SANE!
I DON'T INTEND TO SPLIT THE EMBEZZLED FUNDS WITH JOHN DIRGE! I'M NOT GETTING SOFT!
THE PEARL-HANDLED REVOLVER LISTENED IN MONA'S HAND AS SHE LEVELLED ITS BARREL ON A DIRECT LINE WITH MARKHAM'S BACK. DIRGE, INSIDE OF THE LAWYER'S BODY, DID NOT SUSPECT SHE WAS DOUBLE-CROSSING THE LAWYER, TOO.
I DON'T PLAN TO CUT YOU IN EITHER, MARKHAM!
AGHH!
BLAM
I MUST... AGH... GET OUT OF MARKHAM'S BODY! OR HE'LL... AGH... DIE, AND I'LL BE TRAPPED IN HIS DEAD BODY!
NO!
GOT... TO... GET... OUT... FAST!
OUT OF MARKHAM'S BODY, DIRGE MOVED QUICKLY TOWARD THE HORROR-STRUCK MONA. HER FATE WAS DOOMED!
THIS, MONA... FOR YOUR CHEATING... AND DOUBLE-CROSSING!

AS JOHN DIROE STOOD ALONE IN HIS HOUSE WITH THE BODIES OF HIS TWO VICTIMS, HE HEARD A CAR PULL UP OUTSIDE. HOPE STIRRED IN DIROE, FOR HE REMEMBERED MONA SAYING THAT THE DOCTOR WAS LATE FOR THEIR MEETING.





WHEN [illegible] USED HIS POWER A THIRD TIME, DR. AORTA'S BODY WAS EXPERIENCING A HEART ATTACK!
[illegible]E MAN! I NEED [illegible]REATMENT... [illegible]DRENALIN... [illegible]ELP...
THEY'RE IN HERE!
IN THAT TIMELESS MOMENT IN WHICH DIANE'S WILL ENVELOPED THE MIND OF DR. AORTA, DIANE SLIPPED OVER THE BOUNDARY LINE INTO THE DEMI-WORLD OF DEATH. AND THIS TIME HE WAS WEAK!
I-I CAN'T GO ON! THE PAIN IN MY HEART IS CUTTING LIKE A KNIFE!
HE WILL BE OURS THIS TIME!
I AM THE DEVIL AND I AM DEATH!
IT IS YOU! YOU... CAME TO MY ROOM IN THE ASYLUM.. AND MADE THE BARGAIN WITH ME! YOU GAVE ME THE CURSED POWER TO ENTER OTHER MEN'S BODIES!

THE EERIE BARGAIN WAS CONSUMMATED AS GROTESQUE FORMS SHOULDED HIM AND GHOULISH ARMS EMBRACED HIM -- AND DRAGGED HIM DOWN INTO THE BOTTOMLESS VOID WHERE PERFIDIOUS SOULS RESIDE! FOR EVIL ENGENDERS ONLY EVIL, AND THE DEVIL ALWAYS CLAIMS HIS OWN!